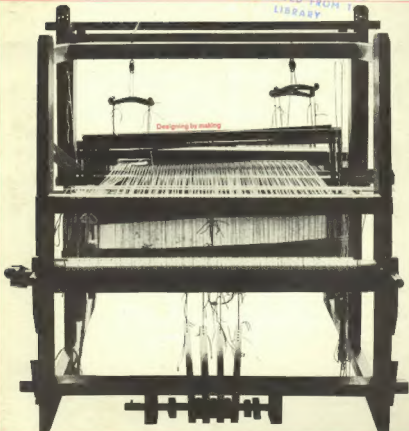


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Designing by making



Design

Council of Industrial Design 189 July 1985

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with the material that comes from handwork.

Another aspect of the exhibition also makes possible a clear cut statement of the advantages of craftsmanship, this time to the whole scope and repertoire of design. It can be argued that a designer who is himself able to handle the material in prototypes is able to get more directly to the result he wants than a designer who cannot. This is probably true, but more important is the fact that a designer who has the ability to work with his own hands is able to experiment apart from the resources of any particular industry or factory. As a result, he is more independent in the researches he will undertake.

Advantages of this kind can hardly be refuted. That Mellor and

similar designers find a working relationship between design and handwork is a fact. It is their personal solution. That a degree of manual ability frees the designer from absolute dependence on the productive and prototype resources of industry is also a fact. And it is an important one. But implicit in the whole idea of the exhibition is a more intangible claim that 'designing by making' gives to products a distinctively valuable quality, a quality which deserves more systematic support and development.

It would be quite wrong, however, to suggest to industry that a sudden increase in sales might follow automatically from an association with a craftsman, or that the relationship would be an

Handwork and research

The illustrations that follow show some current examples of handwork produced without intention of subsequent manufacture by industry, though the tiles on page 38 are marketed by a large tile producer. They all contain qualities, however, which should make them worth looking at by industry and by designers, for they have the same relationship to design as pure research to technology.

1 Necklace of gold, moonstones and blister pearls made by Gerda Flockinger for the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths.



2 Coffee set in stoneware clay with black glaze inside, white glaze outside, by Rutli Duckworth.

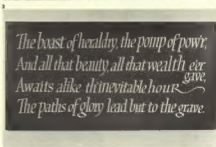
3 Freely cut inscription in Welsh slate by David Kindersley. Panel is about 2 ft long.

4 Embroidered cope for the Archbishop of Western Australia designed and made by Pat Russell.

5 Handwoven rug by Mary Farmer.

6 Moon wall hanging in linen, ramie, camel hair, wood veneer, x-ray film and honesty seeds by Tadek Beutlich.

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easy one to organize and administer. A prerequisite would certainly be a manufacturer fundamentally concerned with the quality and character of his products. But in the long run the direct benefits might be substantial. The international success of Arabia is the classic example of the benefits of a developing relationship between industry and craftsmen and, as the market for well-made things increases, the opportunities should become steadily greater and more broadly based.

There are signs that this is already being recognised in a number of areas. Wedgwood, for instance, now has a studio potter at work in the factory, an extension of the firm's long record of patronage in

using painters or illustrators to produce decorations. In cutlery and silverware, the link between craftsmanship and industry is being exploited effectively and has the vigorous support of Goldsmiths' Hall. But progress is, on the whole, haphazard and it will be a tragedy if the wider range of understanding that craftsmanship could give is allowed to fade away.

It is an oddity of the present situation that, at a time when there is a gradually increasing appreciation of the possibilities of craftsmanship, its role in design education should be decreasing. Recent practice is tending towards a divorce between the student and the materials for which he designs. Technical staff now make prototypes

